



# LOS ANGELES RIVER WATER QUALITY TESTING AND NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

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LA SANITATION

**DRAFT**



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# LOS ANGELES RIVER WATER QUALITY TESTING AND NOTIFICATION

Designated Administrative Agency ("DAA")

**LA Sanitation**

**DRAFT**

ENRIQUE C. ZALDIVAR

Director, LA Sanitation

By \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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## PURPOSE

The Los Angeles River is accessible for limited recreational use each year during the summer season (Memorial Day to September 30). See [www.lariverrecreation.org](http://www.lariverrecreation.org) for detailed information on the recreation zones, which are operated by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and sponsored in part by the City of Los Angeles. To inform the MRCA, users of the recreation zones, and the public of water quality conditions as readily and transparently as possible, the City of Los Angeles Sanitation, (LA Sanitation) has developed a website and notification protocol as described below, effective beginning on Memorial Day 2018 (May 28, 2018). LA Sanitation encourages all visitors to the recreation zone to visit [www.lacitysan.org/waterquality](http://www.lacitysan.org/waterquality) to review water quality conditions, consult on-site signage, and exercise care when accessing the LA River at one's own risk.

## WATER QUALITY SAMPLING

LA Sanitation staff and staff from Sanitation's sampling partner, the Council for Watershed Health, perform sampling and testing of water in the LA River at several locations. In recent years, testing was performed five times per month. Beginning Memorial Day 2018, Sanitation will increase sampling to twice per week. Three sampling locations will be tested at both the Sepulveda Basin and Elysian Valley River Recreation Zones corresponding to the beginning, middle, and end of each recreation zone. Samples are tested in a laboratory for the presence of *E. coli* bacteria, and for each sample a resulting MPN (Most Probable Number) per 100 milliliters (mL) is determined.

## POSTING TEST RESULTS

The tabulated data will be posted at [www.lacitysan.org/waterquality](http://www.lacitysan.org/waterquality) and compared to State of California water quality standards for recreational activities<sup>1</sup>. The website will display bacterial data through time to help place test results in context. Notifications will apply to each recreation zone individually, dependent upon the testing results from each zone.

<sup>1</sup>The current REC-1 standard is 235 MPN/100 mL. Sanitation understands that the State Water Resources Control Board may revise the REC-1 standard Statistical Threshold Value (STV) to 320 MPN/100 mL as soon as December 5, 2017. This protocol will be updated to reflect relevant changes in federal, state, or local laws.



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LA Sanitation will color-code results as follows:

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## GREEN

Water quality is suitable for recreational activities, but swimming is still prohibited. Test results indicate bacteria levels lower than 235 MPN, the limit for "REC-1."

## YELLOW

Users should exercise increased caution. Test results indicate bacteria levels between 235 MPN ("REC-1") and 576 MPN ("Limited REC-1") at one or more of the sampling sites located in the recreation zone.

## RED

LA River not suitable for recreational activities. Test results indicate bacteria levels exceeding 576 MPN ("Limited REC-1") at two or more of the sampling sites located in the recreation zone.

**At all times: Water quality may be impaired. No Swimming. Avoid water contact. Wash your body with soap and water if you contact the water. Do not drink the water. Contact your health care professional if you become ill after water contact.**

## Notifications

LA Sanitation will identify "Findings of Concern" based on the testing results. When *E. coli* levels exceed the REC-1 standard, LA Sanitation staff will distribute a precautionary notice and the test results via email to the distribution list and will reiterate the safe practices described above.

Findings of Concern will also include reports of sewage spills or other discharges that may affect the recreation zones, or single-sample test results that exceed the "Limited REC-1" (LREC-1) standard of 576 MPN at two or more of the sampling sites located in the recreation zone. In these instances:

- A Closure Advisory notice that recommends a temporary suspension of river recreation would be written and shared immediately with relevant City offices.
- The Closure Advisory would be shared with the MRCA, with a recommendation to MRCA to suspend recreational activities and prominently display closure signs.
- The Closure Advisory will be posted to the LA Sanitation website and sent to the distribution list.
- The Closure Advisory will be sent to L.A. County Department of Public Health (DPH) staff to post on its website.
- The Closure Advisory will be posted on LA Sanitation's social media.
- The Closure Advisory will be posted on LA Stormwater's website and will be sent to their email distribution list.
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- Both the LA Sanitation Call Center and the MyLA311 Call Center will be informed of the Closure Advisory.
- The Closure Advisory will be issued as soon as possible, but no later than the same day the Finding of Concern is confirmed.

When a sewage spill affects the recreation zone, the Closure Advisory will remain in effect and daily sampling will commence until two consecutive samples no longer exceed 576 MPN.

When sampling results exceed the 576 MPN ("LREC-1") at two or more of the sampling sites located in the recreation zone, accelerated monitoring will be initiated. The location will be re-sampled within 48 hours. If the re-sample exceeds 576 MPN at two or more of the sampling sites, then the station will be sampled again within another 48 hours. When sampling shows that less than two sampling sites in the recreation zone exceed 576, the Closure Advisory will be rescinded following the same communication protocol outlined above, and routine (twice per week) sampling will resume. Since sampling will be conducted twice per week, any routine sample taken within 48 hours of an exceedance at the same site, will also count as the accelerated monitoring sample.

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